

MDMA

**INFORMATION GUIDE ON USE,
EFFECTS, SAFETY AND HELP**

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CREW

INTRODUCTION

MDMA is the shortened chemical name for the synthetic psychoactive drug 3,4-Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine. MDMA can come in powder or crystal form and is also the active ingredient expected to be found in ecstasy pills.

In the 1970s, MDMA was known as 'empathy' and it slowly made its way from research settings into recreational drug markets. It was controlled in the UK in 1977 but its use continued to increase and by the late 1980s it was rebranded as ecstasy and widely used in the electronic music scene.

The amount of MDMA found in ecstasy pills in Europe has increased over the last decade, with some pills containing three times an average dose.

During the 2000s it became more common for people to access MDMA powder due to a general distrust in the contents of pills but now both powder and pill forms are common. Throughout this booklet we will use the term MDMA to describe both MDMA powder and ecstasy pills.

All drug use has risks. This booklet is for information only and does not constitute or replace medical advice. If you have medical concerns about your drug use, please speak to a medical professional.

GETTING HIGH?

Before taking any drug...

- Spend at least two hours researching the drug you are planning to take. These sites contain more information about the risks and effects of different drugs:

crew.scot

erowid.org

psychonautwiki.org

drugsand.me

tripsit.me

rollsafe.org



- Test the drug. If you don't have access to a drug checking service, reagent testing kits are available online and can give a greater understanding of what the drug contains, but they may not be suitable for identifying newer compounds or adulterants and can tell you nothing about purity or strength.



- Plan your doses and use a watch or timer to keep track of how frequently you are dosing.
- Grind or crush powders and crystals down as fine as possible before use. This makes it easier to judge a dose, speeds up absorption into the body and reduces the damage to soft tissue from abrasion.
- If possible, break pills using a pill cutter (these are available from pharmacies) or crush into a powder to split doses evenly.
- Use scales to measure the dose. Start with a small dose and go slow! Remember, that the more of a drug you take, the riskier it is and the more likely you are to experience negative effects.
- Avoid mixing different drugs including alcohol and medicines.
- Stay with people you trust, in a safe environment and be aware of dangers, such as water (e.g. rivers, lakes) and sharp or hot objects.
- MDMA can lower inhibitions and increase the likelihood of taking risks related to money, sex and other behaviours. Before you take it, set yourself some boundaries and try to stick to them.
- Have a plan for getting home so you don't have to walk long distances with a tired body and brain.



EFFECTS

MDMA is an empathogen-type drug that increases feelings of empathy and connection. It can have stimulant effects including increased energy and jaw tension, and psychedelic effects including enhanced colour/sound and hallucinations.

MDMA can make you feel chatty, euphoric and sexually aroused. You may feel more connected to music and people, and be able to have conversations more freely. It also increases your heart rate and body temperature.

Other effects include dry mouth, dilated pupils and difficulty urinating.

The effects generally last three to six hours and after-effects may be felt for up to three days (the comedown).

Long-term or heavy use of MDMA can lead to increased feelings of unease, a chronic low mood and more difficulty in managing feelings of anxiety.

WHAT'S IN A PILL?

- Ecstasy pills usually contain a mixture of MDMA powder or crystal, bulking agents and binding agents (ingredients added to help form the pill).
- Since ecstasy pills hit the market, there have been alerts and media reports about 'bad batches'. You may hear rumours of pills being sold that are mixed with any number of things but it's important to find accurate information based on drug checking results where possible.
- It is possible that any drugs you buy could be mixed with unexpected and unwanted ingredients called adulterants. Try to only purchase drugs from people you trust. Where possible, use a drug checking service to find out exactly what the drug contains.
- Reagent test kits are available online, but remember, although they can give a greater understanding of what the drug contains, they may not be suitable for identifying newer compounds or adulterants and can tell you nothing about purity or strength.
- While there are often reports of chemicals like rat-poison being added into pills, the data from drug checking services around the world shows that these kinds of adulterants are unlikely. It is more likely that compounds such as caffeine or new psychoactive substances are added in addition to, or instead of MDMA.
- Some of these adulterants can be more dangerous than the MDMA itself, such as PMA (para-Methoxyamphetamine). In comparison to MDMA, PMA is more toxic in lower doses and it takes longer for the effects to kick in.

'Bad pills' being reported in the media may have led people to believe that taking MDMA powder is somehow safer than taking pills. This is based on the assumption that MDMA powder or crystal is more difficult to mix with other drugs - this is not the case. MDMA crystal can also be mixed with other riskier and longer lasting drugs. In recent years a number of substances, including N-Ethylpentylone, have been detected in drugs sold as both MDMA powder and pills.

Whilst adulterants are something to be concerned by, it is important to remember that **most MDMA-related harm is due to the way people take MDMA**. Most hospitalisations and deaths are linked to people taking high doses, polydrug use, overheating or not having access to water.



It is important to read reliable information about drugs and their risks. Spend time researching any drug you are planning to take and follow information provided by public health bodies.

To stay informed about the drugs that are in circulation:

- Visit WEDINOS (wedinos.org) for drug testing results.
- Follow The Loop (wearetheloop.org) for drug alerts, information and testing data.
- Download the TripApp application (tripapp.org) for drug alerts and results from international drug checking organisations.

Remember – even if your pill looks the same as one that is reported to only contain MDMA, that doesn't confirm the contents of your pill.



COMING UP

- One dose of MDMA for an average person is considered to be around 80 milligrams (this dose should not be taken as a recommendation).
- On average, pills contain more MDMA than they used to. One pill may contain more than one dose and even if the pill looks the same and was part of the same batch, the amount of MDMA between pills can vary. Always dose low, start with a half, or a quarter.
- Some pills release MDMA into the body quickly (within 30 minutes) but some can take up to 90 minutes. There is no way to tell by looking at the pill, so wait at least two hours before taking more.
- Avoid taking drugs when alone and have a sober friend around if possible. Tell them what you have taken, how much and when.
- Be aware that if you crush the drug, or split a pill, the effects may come on more quickly and intensely. The effects also come on more quickly when snorted than when swallowed. If the effects are too intense, stay calm, move somewhere quiet and cool, and sip on water.
- If the effects become overwhelming, sit down and try to stay relaxed, the intensity should reduce with time. Get help if you need it. If in doubt, ring 999 for an ambulance.
- If you experience clenching of your jaw or teeth grinding, chew gum or soft, sugar-free sweets to prevent damage to your teeth. Magnesium supplements may help to reduce jaw clenching but sticking to low doses is the best way to prevent this.

COMING DOWN

- As the effects of MDMA start to wear off you may feel an urge to re-dose but keep an eye on how much you are taking throughout a night.
- Sometimes the peak of the MDMA experience can be hugely euphoric and you may want to recreate that by taking more. If it has only been a few hours since you took your last dose, try changing your environment e.g. moving to a different room at the party or club or putting on some different music.
- Try to resist taking any other drug, or at least wait until the effects of the MDMA have completely worn off before taking anything else.
- Keep the next day clear to relax. People may experience feelings of anxiety and depression. If you feel low or anxious speak to people you trust.
- Stay hydrated by sipping water or an isotonic drink. Aim to drink half a pint (284mL) per hour. You won't need much more than this unless you are in a hot, busy environment. It's important to stay hydrated but be aware that drinking too much water can be dangerous.
- Over the next few days, your emotions could be up and down. If you feel irritable or bad-tempered do something that will relax you.
- Take a shower and drink some hot, sweet decaffeinated or herbal tea. Eat healthy balanced meals; if you're not hungry try to eat fruit/veg and take multivitamins.
- Some people may experience 'brain zaps' (brief electric shock-like sensations in the head) after a heavy MDMA session. This side effect should reduce with time but if it worsens or becomes more frequent, please speak to a medical professional.

ROUTES OF ADMINISTRATION

Route of administration is the way that you take the drug. The most common routes of administration for MDMA are dabbing and swallowing.



Regardless of your route of administration, it is important to research your desired method extensively before consuming any drug and take regular breaks from drug use to give your body time to heal.



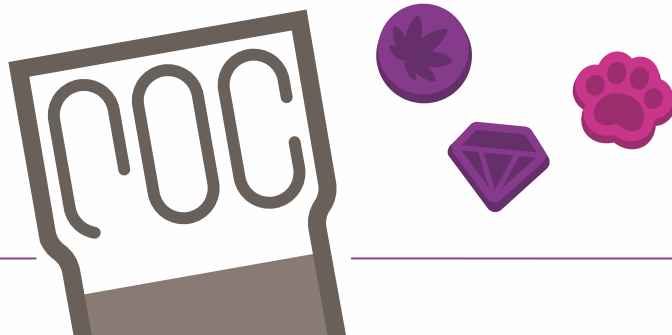
DABBING?

- 1** Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after use.
- 2** Grind or crush MDMA down as fine as possible before use. This makes it easier to judge a dose and speeds up absorption into the body.
- 3** Split the bag into several smaller doses in advance to help you keep track of how much you are taking.
- 4** Dose low - use your finger to 'dab' (place) a small dose of powder on the back of the tongue. Avoid rubbing it on the gums as this can cause gum decay.
- 5** Have water or an isotonic drink on hand to rinse out your mouth after.
- 6** Avoid sharing the same baggie with others - each time you dip into the bag you are leaving saliva behind.



SWALLOWING?

- 1** Dose low — start with quarter or half of a pill. Some pills can be hard to break. For best effect use a pill cutter and break your pill up prior to going out.
- 2** Grind or crush MDMA down as fine as possible before use. This makes it easier to judge a dose and speeds up absorption into the body.
- 3** Use a new cigarette paper or gel capsule to 'bomb' (swallow) powder.
- 4** Start with a small amount and wait two hours before re-dosing. Some pills will take a while to break down and therefore longer for you to feel the effects.
- 5** If mixed into a drink, care should be taken to accurately dose and the bottle/cup marked to ensure no one else accidentally drinks it. Never leave your drink unattended and avoid drinking from bottles/cups if you are unsure of what's in them.



SNORTING?

Over time snorting any drug can degrade the septum (the cartilage separating the nostrils). It can also lead to a reduced sense of smell, nose-bleeds, pain when swallowing, a runny/blocked nose and recurring nose, sinus or throat infections.

- 1** Avoid snorting pills - the MDMA they contain is held together by fillers and colouring that can irritate your nose and sinuses.
- 2** Grind or crush MDMA down as fine as possible and divide it into small lines. Ensure the surface is clean - unclean surfaces such as toilets, phones and keys can spread disease. Use an alcohol wipe if possible.
- 3** Avoid using bank notes as a tool to snort MDMA, as they aren't disposable and can cut the inside of your nose - post-its or paper straws are a good alternative to notes.
- 4** Sharing snorting tools can spread infections and blood borne viruses (e.g. hepatitis C, HIV) - only use your own equipment. Get tested regularly for BBVs.
- 5** Position the tube as high up the nostril as possible and alternate nostrils for each dose.
- 6** Rinse your nose out with clean water at the end of a session, to prevent the powder causing further damage to the inside of your nose.
- 7** Apply a thin layer of vitamin E oil to the inside of the nose after rinsing.

UP THE BUM?

Taking drugs 'up the bum' is also called shelving, plugging, bumping or rectal administration. This route is efficient at absorbing drugs into the bloodstream (i.e. more MDMA enters your system than when snorting) but regularly shelving MDMA powder or pills can cause soft tissue damage, rectal bleeding and increased sensitivity.

- 1** Ensure all equipment is clean and sterile before use - this includes washing your hands.
- 2** Dissolve the crushed powder in sterile water (0.5 millilitres is usually more than enough).
- 3** Use a clean, needleless syringe (or single use straw or lube launcher) to draw up the water containing the drug.
- 4** Add lube to the outside of the syringe to allow for easier entry and to prevent soft tissue damage.
- 5** Lie on your side, insert the syringe into the anus and slowly press the plunger all the way in. After a few minutes, gently and slowly pull the syringe out.



- 6** You can also insert the drugs in a gel capsule or cigarette paper, but this is more physically damaging than dissolving the drugs in water. Use lube and wash your hands before and after administration.
- 7** Some drugs or fillers can make the bum numb and you may not be aware of damage - take care and check the area with clean hands. Be aware that this can make it harder for you to feel when you need to go to the toilet.
- 8** Some drugs (such as GBL) and adulterants (unexpected contents) might burn or damage tissue, which increases the risk of infection.
- 9** If you plan to have anal sex, use a condom and check for any reduced sensation or damage beforehand.
- 10** Sharing water, mixing cups, syringes, straws, lube launchers and lube can spread infections and blood borne viruses (e.g. hepatitis C, HIV) - only use your own. Get tested regularly for STIs and BBVs.
- 11** Look out for the signs of haemorrhoids (lumps inside and around your bum) or signs of infection and treat them quickly.
- 12** Use a vitamin E capsule or apply a thin layer of vitamin E oil to the inside of the anus after a session.



MIXING

Polydrug use means taking more than one drug at a time (including alcohol and medicines). Taking different drugs at the same time increases the risk of each drug.



Mixing drugs can cause unexpected and unpredictable results and is a major risk factor in drug-related deaths in Scotland.

If you do mix drugs, do your research, ensure you are somewhere safe and take way less of both substances than you would if you were only taking one.

Taking MDMA with other uppers (such as cocaine, caffeine and amphetamine) increases the strain on the heart and body. Mixing may also reduce some of the desired effects, whilst increasing toxicity, so it's best to only stick to taking one drug at a time. Take regular breaks, stay hydrated and look out for signs of overheating.



Mixing MDMA with cannabis, psychedelics (such as LSD) or dissociatives (such as ketamine) can make the experience more intense and more difficult to control. People mixing stimulants and psychedelics may experience increased bodily sensations and increased heart rate, as well as increased feelings of nausea, anxiety and loss of control. Reduce feelings of anxiety by staying calm, controlling your breathing and telling someone how you are feeling!

Mixing MDMA with downers including opioids (such as heroin) or depressants (such as alcohol, GHB and benzodiazepines like Valium and Xanax) is dangerous. Depressant drugs depress your central nervous system which means they slow down your heart rate, response time and breathing. **It is especially risky to mix MDMA with drugs that increase serotonin in the body**, such as mental health medications like monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs - a type of antidepressant) and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs - another type of antidepressant).

These can dull some of the expected effects of MDMA such as euphoria or 'rushing' but the physical effects such as increased heart rate and temperature will still occur. People may be tempted to take more to feel the effects, but this increases the harms including the risk of serotonin syndrome (page 24). Some synthetic opiates can also increase the risk of serotonin toxicity including tramadol, methadone and fentanyl*. Extensively research the interactions and effects of your medication prior to drug use, paying particular attention to the impact on serotonin syndrome.

Mixing MDMA with alcohol (or other downers) can mask the effects of each drug while increasing the risk - you will still be intoxicated but your perception of how drunk or high you are will change.

If you are taking MDMA and can't avoid alcohol completely, try to limit yourself to only a few drinks, choose drinks with a lower alcohol content or drink water or soft drinks between alcoholic ones.

THE LAW

The sale and production of (non-medicinal) MDMA is illegal worldwide.

In the UK, MDMA is a Class A drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971). It is illegal to possess, supply, possess with intent to supply, manufacture and/or import MDMA.



Penalties for supply (including giving it to your mates for free) are up to life in prison and/or an unlimited fine. The penalties will depend on factors such as previous convictions, the severity of the offence and the type of drug.

In Scotland, it also a crime to drive with a specified controlled drug in the body, in excess of a specified limit.

The law applies to controlled drugs such as cocaine, cannabis, MDMA, LSD and heroin, as well as prescription drugs, such as diazepam. Only drive if you are sober, feel well and aren't sleep deprived. Be aware that MDMA can be detected in your blood for several days after use.

Having a criminal record for drug-related offences can cause significant consequences including:

- Stigma (societal disapproval)
- Loss of employment/education
- Reduced career opportunities
- Higher insurance premiums
- Limited travel opportunities

For more information on MDMA and the law, visit:

www.release.org.uk

H₂O

It is important to stay hydrated – especially when taking MDMA and similar drugs. To keep hydrated aim to drink half a pint (284mL) of water or isotonic drink per hour.

If you are in a hot, busy environment like a festival or club, or are dancing or exercising you will need more fluids, as MDMA leads to an increase in body temperature and this can make you sweat more. Even then you won't need more than a pint (568mL) per hour.

Festivals, bars and clubs in the UK are legally required to provide free water.



It is important to make sure that you don't drink too much water as this can be dangerous and lead to water intoxication. Symptoms of water intoxication include **headache, dizziness, nausea and vomiting.**

MDMA AND PHANTOM PEES

Ever taken MDMA and not been able to pee? Drinking more water is not necessarily the solution. MDMA affects the secretion of vasopressin which is an antidiuretic hormone. This hormone makes urine more concentrated meaning that an excessive amount of sodium (salt) is peed out. This decreases the amount of salt in the blood, which means the blood is too dilute.

MDMA may also make you feel thirsty and give you an urge to drink more. This increased water intake and excess excretion of salt, combined with difficulty peeing, causes the blood to become overly diluted. This is known as hyponatremia and it can be life threatening. The old phantom pees can be annoying but try not to drink more than you need.

You just have to wait it out, sit down (and relax your muscles), stick your hand under running water or think of streams...

When you do pee keep an eye on the colour – dark yellow means dehydrated, very light yellow or clear means too hydrated. You want it to be the colour of straw.

Since MDMA makes you heat up and sweat, you should ensure you have a good intake of water and isotonic drinks, take regular dance breaks, wear loose clothing and use a fan if you are somewhere really hot.



MENTAL HEALTH

The risk of experiencing an issue with your mental health when taking drugs is increased if you aren't sleeping well, eating well or are already diagnosed with or experiencing mental health difficulties. Taking drugs in high doses, frequently dosing or taking more than one drug at a time also increases the risk.

Some people may be tempted to stop taking their medication so that they can take MDMA at an event or over summer, but this should be avoided. Some mental health medicines can cause significant withdrawal symptoms which can last several weeks and may be worse if stopped suddenly. Stopping your medication can also make it more difficult to manage your mental health. All changes to your medication should be discussed with a medical professional.

If you have concerns about your mental health and wellbeing, get in touch with a local mental health provider, your GP or CREW.

Over time, people who take MDMA frequently and/or in high doses may feel anxious and irritable. It can also have a negative impact on mood, concentration and sleep. There is some evidence that this is linked to the action of MDMA and serotonin.*



*www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1071023

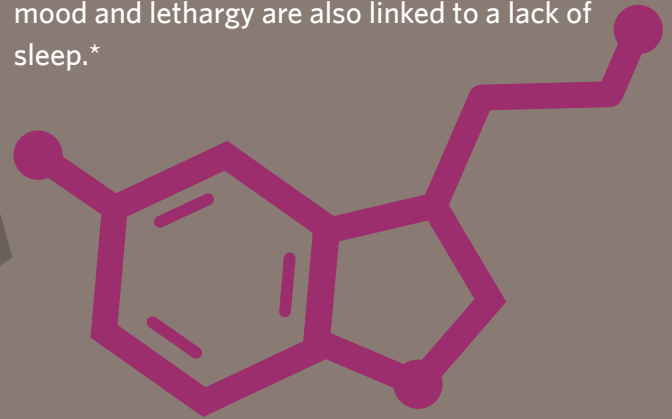
SEROTONIN

Our mood is regulated by chemical messengers in the brain called neurotransmitters, such as serotonin and dopamine. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that influences mood, appetite, sleep and temperature regulation. It has different roles depending on where it is released in the body. It is found in the brain, in the gut and in blood cells.

When you take MDMA, the rush of euphoria is caused by an excess of serotonin. The MDMA molecules bind to receptors in the brain and stop the usual process of serotonin re-uptake.

Like amphetamine and cocaine, MDMA also causes the release of excess dopamine (the 'happy' chemical) and noradrenaline in the rewards centre of your brain. This action may be responsible for the stimulant effects, as well as the urge to re-dose that some people feel.

After taking MDMA many people will experience a dip in their mood and may temporarily experience symptoms of anxiety and depression. This is often thought to be linked to the changes in serotonin levels while taking MDMA. The feelings of low mood and lethargy are also linked to a lack of sleep.*



As well as binding to receptors that cause the brain to release much more serotonin than it usually would, MDMA also temporarily prevents your brain from making any new serotonin for a few days afterwards. It does this by destroying tryptophan hydroxylase, the enzyme needed to produce serotonin. It takes a few days for your body to replenish these enzymes, which may explain the 'comedown' or low mood that people feel for a few days after taking MDMA.

Some people think that taking supplements like 5-HTP can help reduce this dip in mood. 5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) is a naturally occurring amino acid that your body uses to produce serotonin. There isn't a lot of strong evidence to suggest that taking supplements is going to be effective.

If you do choose to take these supplements you should avoid taking them for 12 hours before and after taking MDMA.

5-HTP supplements are not recommended for long term use. It's important to never take 5-HTP right before you take MDMA, as this may result in a dangerous level of serotonin being released.

People who take high doses of MDMA or mix MDMA with other drugs (including medicines) are at greater risk of serotonin syndrome. Serotonin syndrome (or toxicity) is a potentially life threatening health condition caused by too much serotonin. **The main symptoms include: rigid, jerky, twitchy unusual movements, often involving the legs shaking; fully dilated pupils; overheating; sweating; shivering; racing heart; and the person appearing agitated and confused.**

Some of these symptoms are the same as those in a stimulant overdose. In an emergency always seek medical help.



IN AN EMERGENCY

Signs of a stimulant overdose...

- Seizures/fitting/rigid
- Hyperthermia (overheating)
- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Rapid heart rate/chest pains/heart attack
- Hallucinations
- Difficulty breathing
- Anxiety/fear/panic



DO!

- Keep calm
- Get help
- Call 999 (or 112)
- Give as much information as possible including location, age, gender, what has happened and be honest about what they have taken
- Stay with the casualty
- If they are distressed, sit them somewhere calm and give reassurance
- If they are fitting, keep the area safe and move anything that could hurt them
- If they are overheating, take them somewhere cooler, loosen tight clothing and remove excess clothing such as jackets, cool them using fans or wet towels and give them small sips of water
- If they are unconscious, put in the recovery position (or on their side) and monitor breathing

- If they stop breathing, perform CPR (chest compressions and rescue breaths)
- If you think opioids may be involved (e.g. they have taken heroin or are on a methadone prescription) administer naloxone

DON'T!

- Leave them alone
- Inflict excessive pain to wake them
- Give any other drug
- Encourage them to vomit
- Give them anything to eat or drink (apart from small sips of water)
- Put them in a bath/shower
- Walk them about
- Attempt to restrain them or hold them down



MDMA THERAPY

After a long history of underground therapeutic use, MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder is now being researched. This therapeutic application of MDMA looks quite different to its recreational use and is a world away from taking MDMA at a festival or club. It also works very differently from traditional psychiatric treatments.

Before a therapeutic session, the patient spends weeks being psychologically prepared for the experience by a specially trained therapist. This process involves the setting of clear intentions and the building of trust between the therapist and the patient due to vulnerability the patient might feel when taking MDMA.

During the session, patients may spend time lying down, listening to calming music and talking with the therapist.

Talking therapy will continue in the days and weeks after taking MDMA. This is important to allow for the processing of any insights, thoughts and feelings that have come up during the sessions.

It is important to remember that MDMA therapy is not yet legal in the UK, as research on both its effectiveness, and importantly, its safe practice has not been completed. If you are thinking about taking part in either a legal clinical trial or a session with an underground therapist be mindful of your safety and the risks.

For more information on MDMA therapy, visit:

www.maps.org/research/mdma

SEX

Like other stimulant drugs, MDMA can increase your feelings of arousal while making you feel pretty loved up, so it's important to think about consent. Are you really feeling it? Are they? Ensure you have full consent before, and during, any sexual activity.

It's also important to think about safe sex - grab condoms, dams and whatever else will help keep you safe depending on how you have sex. Not sure about your options? Ask us!

Use lube. This reduces the risk of the condom breaking, prevents damage to the soft tissue and makes sex more enjoyable! Taking stimulant drugs can reduce natural lubrication and this can increase the risk of passing on infections and disease. Get tested regularly for STIs and BBVs.

It can be more difficult to get an erection when on MDMA but be aware that the risk of polydrug use includes drugs like Viagra. Avoid mixing MDMA with sexual enhancement drugs, or at least wait until the effects of MDMA have completely worn off. Anyone who has an erection for more than four hours should seek urgent medical attention.

Be aware that if you vomit or experience diarrhoea when taking drugs, your contraceptive pill could be affected. Use a barrier method or think about long term contraception such as an injection or implant.

EAT WELL

MDMA suppresses your appetite and can make it easy to skip meals or miss out on healthy meals. Eat a healthy meal at least one hour before taking MDMA, to reduce the risk of nausea.

When the effects wear off people may find themselves binging on high-fat, low-nutrient foods. Poor nutrition can lower your immune system leaving you more prone to coughs and colds.

Try planning and preparing a week of meals in advance - this will make you less likely to skip meals. Carry healthy snacks with you - nuts, seeds and bananas are a great source of quick vitamins and essential nutrients. Make sure you are aiming for a good mix of calcium, protein, iron and healthy fats. Try to pack lots of vitamins into your diet and take vitamin supplements if needed.

Some people might find that stimulant drugs keep their weight down – however, it is healthy to have some fat mass. If you think that you are tempted to use more MDMA to avoid weight gain, then consult your GP or nutritionist. For support on eating disorders, visit Beat:

www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

If you are diabetic, it is important to check your blood sugar is at a safe level before, during and after taking drugs. Read our Drugs and Diabetes resource for more info:

www.crew.scot/drugs-and-diabetes



SLEEP MANAGEMENT

MDMA can make it difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep. It also reduces sleep quality.

If you have been out, take an hour to wind down before going to bed.

Avoid taking stimulants (including caffeinated drinks) in the few hours before bedtime. Avoid taking other drugs to ease the effects of MDMA. Mindfulness and breathing exercises can help you relax and dull the stimulant effects.

Try to exercise each day. Even short periods of light exercise can improve sleep quality. Maintain a regular sleep routine and stick to it.

Avoid eating, drinking alcohol and using electronic devices close to bedtime. Use an app or change the settings on your phone to reduce the blue light emitted from the screen.

Keep your bedroom cool and dark when you are trying to sleep.

Make your bed comfortable. Keep your sheets clean and use a good pillow.

Pay attention to what works for you – keep going when you find it!



CUTTING DOWN?

Try to leave at least three months in between MDMA taking sessions. It takes a while for your brain and body to readjust after taking MDMA. If you are taking it more frequently it might be a good idea to lay off it for a while.

Think about your use - what are the pros and cons? Write them down. Set small, manageable and measurable goals, like increasing the length of time between each dose.

Only carry what you plan on taking. If you have a couple of pills in your pocket it is easy to take more than you anticipated. Leave what you don't need at home (in a safe place).

Track patterns of use and identify strategies for managing triggers. If you usually take MDMA with certain people, hold off seeing them for a bit.

If you always end up taking it after you have had a few beers, avoid drinking.

Manage your cravings. Try natural highs such as light exercise and meditation. Many people find mindfulness to be a useful practice to develop.

Drug services can help support you to reduce, stabilise or cease drug taking. Consider talking to someone if you are finding it difficult to stop taking drugs. For drug services in your area, visit:

www.scottishdrugservices.com



If you are in Edinburgh and the Lothians and are concerned about your own, or a loved one's drug use, Crew is here for you! We provide free, inclusive, non-judgemental counselling for those experiencing problems related to psychostimulant drugs.

**To find out more, call 0131 220 3404
or visit: www.crew.scot**

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